

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. – 15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended) A method of accessing an interior of a heart chamber of a heart, comprising:

inserting a port into a chamber wall of the heart chamber while the heart remains beating, the port having a lumen therethrough for accessing the interior of the heart chamber from exterior of the heart chamber;

inserting a stapling device through the lumen of the port; and

positioning staples from the stapling device into at least a portion of a mitral valve annulus to reduce a length of the portion of the mitral valve annulus.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein the inserting step comprises securing the port in an atrial wall to access the interior of the heart.

18. – 27. (Canceled)

28. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim ~~27~~ 16, further comprising the step of connecting the staples together with a strip of material.

29. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim ~~27~~ 16, wherein the positioning step comprises placing staples into the posterior mitral annulus.